

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR EAID IN US

SUBJECT: INDIAN MEDIA COVERAGE - PL480 NEGOTIATIONS

BEGIN SUMMARY: INDIAN NEWSPAPERS PROMINENTLY FRONTPAGED DELHI-DATELINED STORIES THAT INDO-US TALKS ON FOOD AID HAVE BEEN "DEADLOCKED" BECAUSE OF THE "HUMILIATING CONDITIONS" PUT FORTH BY THE U.S. END SUMMARY.

1. BASED ON THE UNITED NEWS OF INDIA WIRE STORY, THE NEWS ACCOUNTS STRESSED THE DISCUSSIONS ON A "NEO-PL480" AGREEMENT FOR THE IMPORT OF 300,000 TONS OF FOODGRAINS FROM THE US ARE UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE BEEN "DEADLOCKED" BECAUSE OF THE US "HUMILIATING CONDITIONS".

2. HEADLINES USED THE WORDS "DEADLOCKED" AND "HUMILIATING." VARIATIONS IN THE PARTY-ORIENTED PAPERS INCLUDED "HUMILIATING US TERMS BLOCK PACT ON GRAINS" (MOTHERLAND), AND "POLITICAL STRINGS" TO WHEAT OFFER BY US?" (PATRIOT). THE NATIONAL HERALD DID NOT CARRY THE STORY.

3. THE DISPATCHES QUOTED FINANCE MINISTRY SOURCES BEING "TIGHT-LIPPED" AT THE PRESENT STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT INDIA IS "FIRMLY OPPOSED" AND "TOTALLY AGAINST" ANY "NEO-PL 480" AGREEMENT.

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4. REPORTAGE ADDED THAT WHILE NEGOTIATIONS MAY NOT BE FORMALLY ENDED, THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MAY ALLOW THE SITUATION "TO DRAG ON FOR THE TIME BEING." THE MOSCOW-LINING PATRIOT CITED "AUTHORITATIVE" SOURCES SAYING THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE CONCLUDED ONLY ON "INDIA'S TERMS."

5. NOTING AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN'S DECEMBER 15 NEWS CONFERENCE REMARK THAT AN AGREEMENT WOULD BE SIGNED "IN A WEEK," NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS ADDED THAT "NO SIGN OF ANY AGREEMENT IS IN SIGHT EVEN AFTER A FORTNIGHT." THEY SAID HE IS RETURNING HOME "A SAD M...3 MAN" BECAUSE OF THE "NEW TOUGH STAND" OF THE CONGRESS."

6. FYI: PRESS TRUST OF INDIA FRIDAY MORNING CARRIES A REUTER WASHINGTON DESPATCH SAYING INDIAN AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS MET THERE THURSDAY "TO TRY TO RESOLVE A SNAG" DELAYING THE FOOD AGREEMENT--"THE SNAG BEING AMERICAN FEARS THAT IT MIGHT END UP IN THE SOVIET UNION." THE WIRE ITEM MENTIONED INDIA'S "REFUSAL" TO ACCEPT A "NO-EXPORT CLAUSE," WHICH IS COMMON TO MOST US CONCESSIONAL FOOD AID AGREEMENTS. WE EXPECT THE INDIAN NEWSPAPERS TO CARRY THIS STORY WIDELY IN THE SATURDAY EDITIONS.MOYNIHAN

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